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## Syrian Civil War: In the Context of Conflict Resolution (Mediation Efforts)

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### Abstract:

*The Syrian Civil War began in 2011 and soon became a chaotic civil war as a result of a nonviolent counter-state protest against Syria's dysfunctional government. In fact, the crisis is the offspring of the Arab Spring which is progressively drawing global and regional powers into proxy conflict in Syria and prolonging the war into unexpected phases. This study is an attempt to analyse various ways of conflict resolution, employed during and after the crisis, with a view to key variables such as interference by foreign powers, a deteriorated socioeconomic condition in Syria including deep sectarian hatred. Many are key players in this war, because Syria is a more acute and complicated group of shiite, regional and global forces among contemporary civil wars. The main groups include Sunni armed groups, such as Al-Nusra, Hezbolshev Lebanon and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS); Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Russia, the US and Qatar.*

**KEYWORDS:** Syrian Civil War, Conflict Management, Negotiations, Mediations

### INTRODUCTION



To put it mildly, the Syrian Conflict is extremely convoluted and creates a hard scenario of how the complicated conflict may be resolved. In support of peaceful settlement and discussion, international parties such as the Arab League and the UN have intervened. The war swept across the nation very soon, as people of Deraa city called for the release, as they painted on the walls the famous cry of mass revolts in Egypt and Tunisia, of the fourteen young students detained, cruelly tortured; Reports indicated that in the early protests, 38 civilians had died and the numbers increased as the protests continued, with the regime of Bashar al-Assad in power for 40 years, extremely violently retaliated by assaulting demonstrators, murdering the first civilians of war (Specia, 2018). (Slackman, 2011). Thus, protests expanded throughout Damascus, Hama, Homs, Latakia and other places from the southern city of Deraa.

400,000 people have died in the Syrian civil war and millions have been displaced (Akpinar, 2016) UN stated at one time that the battlefield turmoil has prevented deaths from being counted but that around half of the population in that nation is displaced generating enormous irregular and chaotic migration. The devastating and degrading impact on the Syrian, financial and socio-political infrastructure has affected, in particular, the entire Middle East, thus helping to facilitate the emergence of a range of jihadist organisations such as the Jabhat-al-Nusra Front, the ISIS, and the conflict resolution. In Syria, there is no measure of the magnitude of humanitarian misery. The fact that the Syrian government blocks international journalists and reporters from entering the country was exceedingly difficult for officials to get the precise death penalty (Slackman, 2011)

In the framework of geopolitics, which are major actors and interests of the war, this report seeks to study closely the Syrian Civil War and in general how the discussions or mediation attempts were made to end it. The paper consists mostly of high quality material such as books, seminars, journals, news clips and articles on the Internet.

## **INCEPTION OF SYRIAN CONFLICT**

The root of the crisis is highly intricate since many non-state and State stakeholders participate in this geopolitical link directly and indirectly at various phases.



Several non-state and state actors participate directly and indirectly and to get an awareness of civil war and counterinsurgency in order to comprehend the conflict. Counterinsurgency efforts are the efforts of a government to preserv law and order against any armed opposition who aim to bring down the government. This was a government's goal, renounced by the autumn of 2012, whereas armed opposition to civil war is muscular and strong enough to stop the government's progress. As a model in Syria, in 2012, the insurgent rule in the northern area and in the Damascus district was turned into a chaotic civil war.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Syria came down to the Ottomans in 1516 and remained part of the Ottoman Empire for for four centuries. In the meanwhile, Syria has seen a major social, economic and political deterioration.

Arab soldiers headed by Emir Feisal seized Damascus in 1918 and helped by British forces thus added 400 years of Ottoman dominance. In July 1920, however, French soldiers seized Damascus and overthrew Feisal. In 1940 Syria was conquered by the Axis during the Second World War as France came down with German troops. In 1946, Syria was independent. The average government time in Syria in 1970, or till 1970, has passed Hafez al-Assad. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republicans has given Syria political stability and built strong ties to Iran and the (USA) Union. On 10 July 2000, following the death of Hafez el-Assad, Bashar al-Assad was elected President of Syria. Initially Bashar al-Assad took the steps towards liberalising Syria, but then he followed the policies of his father, ruled as a dictator who jailed political dissidents and smashed protests and dissent. There were also various incidents that indicated that during his tenure in office, such as domestic media, criticism and economic policies were closely monitored, etc. In addition to rejecting political statements, he prohibited and denied freedom of speech. At that time, Syria's human rights record was not promising at all.

Protests grew and spread across the Syrian country in the spring of 2011. But, on the contrary, this led to armed demonstrators against the regime. Bashar el-Assada tried to stop these protests with the backing of violent forces.

## **SYRIA A COUNTRY OF SUNNI MUSLIM MAJORITIES**

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This fact is not overlooked because the majority of Syrians are Sunni Muslims with a population of 22,5 million (74 percent), while the Shia minority of President Assad's

Alawites is ruled. There were extremely clear accusations that Bashar Al-Assad had privileged Alawites, which had a strong effect on Sunni hatred and different organisations opposed to the Alawites. Kurds, Druze, Armenians, Christians and Arabs are also present in Syria. The Sunni group has some essential and fundamental rights denied.

In addition, it is becoming worse. The social and economic conditions of the crisis are also considered accountable. The two major sectors of Syrian oil and tourism, the U.S., Arabian League and the European Union, were the most successful in implementing the sanctions. The Syrian economy fell by two percent in 2011, according to the IMF study. The unemployment rate was high and there was extremely limited access to the fundamental requirements such water, food, health care and power.

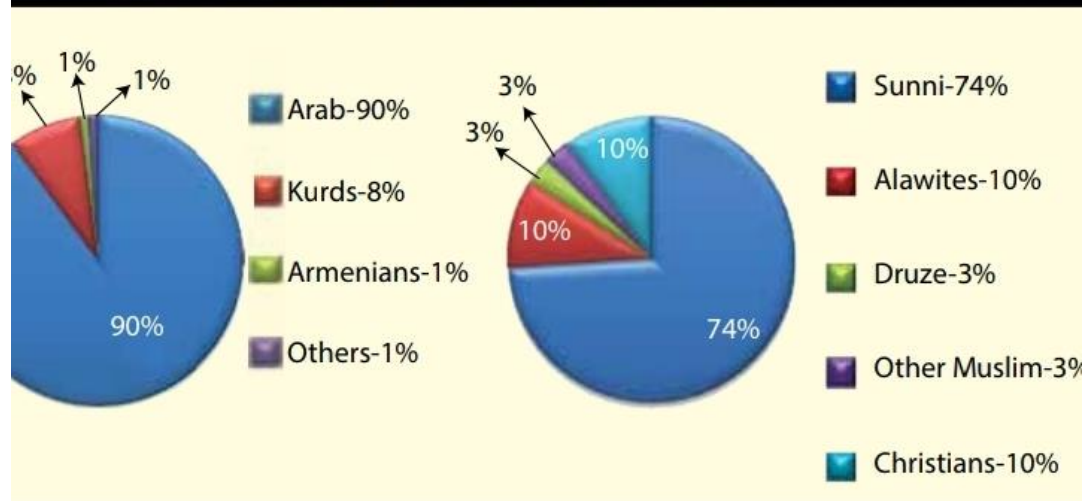
It has also been suggested that the US and Russia's challenges in gas and future energy extraction have also triggered the problem.

Water crises in Syria also served as an active factor in stimulating violence in 2011 since, at the beginning of the conflict, Syria experienced also a calamitous drought in 2006, and 1,3 million Syrians had to migrate from rural areas as a consequence, as water crisis had been active in protesting the government. Destroying 85% of the cattle was responsible for the terrible drought and it also forced residents of over 160 to abandon their homes owing to crop failure.

Socio-economic instability was matured by many factors interlinked with each other such as water scarcity due to drought incorporated with internal migration, unemployment and poverty.

Subdued feedback by international community and Syrian Government to address the ongoing crisis further instigated and provoked protests against the government. Thus there were various faults and drawbacks of Syrian Government, instead of alleviating the protests tactfully the government mishandled the protests in a very insensitive manner when it started in March 2011. The Syrian police lacked appropriate training to manage internal agitations moreover police force was of only a few thousands. Shabiha, an ill-famed pro-

Figure 1: Ethnic (left) and Religious Groups (right) in Syria<sup>41</sup>



regime militias, was used by Bashar al-Assad in Sunni majority areas to suppress protests, frequently murdering unarmed innocent protesters. At troubled areas tanks were used hence developing mass grievances due to usage of excessive force. Entirely ineffective public relations efforts were developed by government and neither it took any steps in evacuating insurgents out of population centres.

Assad was largely dependent upon the elite and only small and trusted detachments (military unit) were stationed in order to execute counterinsurgency campaigns from regular brigades.

All this had limited the capacity of the government to handle all the instabilities and agitations in Syria and simultaneously to control and defeat the insurgency, thereby converting it into a major civil war.

Politicians found it difficult to conclude an agreement that could fully end the issue between both the opposition and the Syrian Government. In addition to the intricate and interminable battle that has led to many groups in the Syrian Conflict, continuous resolution attempts has been challenged. Syria's crisis shows how the negotiating process might be hard since negotiated settlements are a renowned means of shortening and settling civil wars since the conclusion of the Cold War.



## **SYRIAN CONFLICT POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY**

In the Middle East, which was one of the most volatile regions in the world, the country is sealed. The geographical situation of Syria and its distinct demographic characteristics greatly affect the continuing conflict in the nation. It is exceedingly impossible to grasp the whole situation and its impacts, particularly on regional and global issues, without understanding the geopolitics underpinning the Syrian conflict. The nation is located on the east end of the Mediterranean Sea in Southwestern Asia and north of the Arab Peninsula. Syria is surrounded by Lebanon and Israel is bordered by Lebanon, by northern Turkey, eastern Iraq and southern Jordan. It is a decisive factor in the region because of its pivotal position in the area and its connection to several of the world's greatest energy-rich countries. Syria's position makes it a significant player in two of its core gas pipelines: Iran-Iraq-Syria pipelines ('Islamic Pipeline') and Qatar-Saudi Arabia-Jordan-Syria-Turkey pipeline ('Qatar-Turkey Pipeline').

## **CONTINUATION OF THE CONFLICT, COMPLICATED MEDIATIONS AND FAILED NEGOTIATIONS**

As indicated before and in a matter of days the situation in Syria was uncontrolled, the southern city Deraa is a site from whence the crisis began in March 2011. When the Free Syrian Army (FSA) was established by seven defective Syrian officers to "top down the entire system (the Assad administration)," which united opposition forces at the same time, the anti-government rebellion gained a leading influence.

A cooperation against the government in Turkey was established on 23 August 2011 by the Syrian National Council. The FSA was instructed and managed by Turkey quite close to the Syrian border from the southern Hatay province and the field command was within Syria.

In January 2012, in the company of Abu Mohammad al-Joulani, Jabhat-al-Nusra announces his establishment. The organisation also opposed the Assad regime's atrocities. "Conflict extended to the neighbouring nations by the middle of September 2012 and January 2014; the introduction of chemical arms; the influential Kurds and Islamic States" (Akpinar, 2016).



The major internal groups are Assad and the regime supporters, SDF, Syria Democratic Forces and the FSA, rebel forces opposing the government, and the Kurds, seeking to keep the region autonomous (Gilsinan, 2015).

### **ARAB LEAGUE: THE FIRST TO TAKE ACTION TO MANAGE CONFLICTS**

During the Syriac war, the main intergovernmental body in the Middle East, the Arab League, took up the very first discussions for conflict management (Masters & Sergie, 2014). The dispute was originally laid out in internal politics. Afterwards, however, the violence in Syria did not retreat to an interventionist posture. In the interests of meeting Al-Assad on numerous occasions and consulting nations in the area, Nabil al-Arabi, Secretary-General was sent for the mediation mission. The Arab Action Plan was a forum to end violent acts and launch a 'Departure from Military Equipment National Dialogue.' The Syrian Government has hesitantly agreed on the initiative on 30 October 2011 but remained very suspicious in the mediation of al-Arabi, regarded the countries actively advocating the overthrow of Al-Assad, the disappointing Syrian National Council, as a proxy intervention of Saudi Arabia and Qatar condemning the plan, to support the regime's compliance with the end of the regime. The delegation was launched with extraordinary speed, with basic monitoring and monitoring operations around the country. However, the mission lacked enough facilities and was ill-trained and experienced dissension and discord between the Member States in the framework of its purpose and mandate and discussed the fraudulent and unjust offer of the government to contribute to political discourse. The Arab League used coercive tactics in order to obtain cooperation between the government (Akpinar, 2016). Because the regime was reluctant to accept cessation of violence, economic penalties were applied and approved as part of the Arab Action Plan on 30 October 2011. Syria was likewise rejected by the Arab League under the Action Plan. The sanctions were meant to be a significant blow, cutting commerce and investment in the Arab world, when the European Union and the United States had already imposed sanctions on Syria (MacFarquhar & Bakrinov, 2011).

As stated (Hinnebusch & Zartman, 2016). No progress has been accomplished despite great hopes of the negotiations in Syria from 2012 to 2016. During negotiations, the Arab League, Russia, and the United Nations played a key role, but their efforts did not resolve the conflict. The fact that peace processes in Syria have continued to fail raises the question:





why did attempts fail? Some claim the fighters were not prepared to quit fighting, and that the mutually-hurt standstill has never been achieved on either side.

### **FAILURE OF THE FIRST NEGOTIATION ATTEMPT: ACCORDING TO LUNDGREN, 2016**

"The observation mission stopped operations on 28 January 2012 and marked the failure of the first attempt to negotiate" (Lundgren, 2016). It should be notified that the negotiations of the Arab League have made other organisations largely non-inclusive, leading to their failure. This has also led to the failure to carry out the discussions conducted by the United Nations.

On 12 June 2012, UN peacekeeping officer Herve Ladsous initially declared that Syria is in a situation of civil war. Although the action group was composed of representatives of the Arab League (UN China, Russia, France, Turkey, the United States, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, and the European Union) in line with UN 2012, para. 1. The action team was composed of the United Nations.

### **THE GENEVA CONFERENCE'S CONSEQUENCES**

As stated (Hinnebusch & Zartman, 2016).

In the Geneva Communiqué, the final results of the Geneva Conference showed an acceleration of requests for change of regime applied by national discussion (Hinnebusch & Zartman, 2016). In particular, communication centred on constitutional change, the multi-party institutional structure and a transitional government to which opposition and government participation would be mutually accepted.

### **NEGOTIATIONS' CRITICAL DRAWBACK**

According to (Akpınar 2016), the first Round of Geneva negotiations sought, but the parties could not accept the fate of Assad, the key disadvantage of the negotiations being that the key parties, who are the Syrian and Syrian opposition parties, were not represented on the bargain. It is therefore vital that fighting groups should at least not remain unrepresented to carry out anything. (Fabrication, 2009).



Both were opposed by two major countries to see if the dictatorship ought to continue in power. America sought the release of Assad while Russia strongly opposed change of regime (Akpinar, 2016). Russia's attitude was connected to ensuring national safety interests, since Assad's downfall would lead to terrorist spread and greater radicalisation in the Middle East (Kozhanov, 2016). For the United States, the views of Assad on the correction of the brutality, the promotion of democracy as well as regional stability and their stance were underlined (Sorenson, 2013).

The great powers that held over the future of Syria and their contribution to world policy, Geneva underlined the vastly varied perspectives. Kofi Annan therefore failed to address the international community's disputes, which would weaken Russia's support to the government (Lundgren, 2016). And on 2 August 2012, without any lasting peace plan in the Syrian conflict, the official resignation took place.

## **LAKHDAR BRAHIMI'S RESIGNATION: SECOND ROUND OF UN NEGOTIATIONS**

Brahimi was excused for the tougher work of facing the worst and most hazardous damage of the entire area since the earlier days of the 21st century because of the unwillingness of the world community to address the Syriac conflict.

His career includes efforts to achieve peace in Haiti, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Iraq ("Lakhdar Brahimi," 2019). Lakhdar Brahimi was an Algerian diplomat.

While using a more consultative and careful strategy to convince the parties of the futility of the continuing war and stressing again and again the enormous humanitarian loss that they have imposed on Syria, with American passivities and Iranian or Russian intransigence he has never been able to bring forward a potential political solution. Brahimi had to fight more and more parties than ever before in a highly escalated battle. "The dispute started extending into neighbouring countries between September 2012 and January 2014; chemical weapons were deployed; and the influence of the Kurds and Islamic State was increased" (Akpinar, 2016)



He resigned when he realised that both the major causes behind a political resolution, of which Brahimi has always been known, are due to the character and structure of the Syrian regime as they can't implement any persuasive and determined measures unless there are enough pressure on the Syrian President and the anticipated re-election by Bashar Assad. Until international pressure is put in place, Assad will choose to remain in Damascus, no matter whether a single structure is located in a city or in a town or in a single Syria.

Secondly, there is the absence of an international willingness to take crucial steps to revise or restructure the power balance on the ground in Syria. This change would only have led the Syrian regime to embrace a political solution that begins with a transitional period, as well as no other choices.

### **ASSAD IN GENEVA I STATEMENT HE REJECTED THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TRANSITIONAL PHASE AND IN GENEVA II**

The transitional system is that, in the absence of the Assad regime, a committee or a government with "full authority" is formed to oversee the country until a new regime is founded to re-establish the country and seize control from a family who controls everything.

Unfortunately, the Syrian president indicated in his declaration in Geneva I essentially rejected the political solution that could have been launched by a transitional period. In the transitional meeting of the Geneva II, attended by representatives of the regime and the opposition, Assad also declined.

### **ISIL's participation in the Syrian conflict 2012: Massive calamitous:**

The ISI commander, Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi, announced the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) establishment. He declared that in April 2013 the Islamic State in Iraq was separated from their central authority (ISI) and was consolidated by their soldiers. Bothing was rejected by the commanders Al-Nusra and Al-Qeeda.

In the middle of 2013, in certain regions of Syria on 29 June 2014, ISIL evolving via an absorption of Syria, and al-Nusra forces in eastern and northern Syria who claimed



caliphate. As a result of this conduct of ISIL which bruising and traumatised Syria's already-degenerate state unexpectedly intensified rivalry between Al-Nusra et ISIL.

In the area and around the world, ISIS caused profound anxiety with the killing of minorities, the institutionalisation of sex slavery, the conquest of the military and the execution of opponents in horrific brutality. It has damaged landmarks in the historic town of Palmyra such as temples and fueled worldwide commerce in antiquities.

(It must be notified that in February 2014 ISIL changed its name to IS)

### **GOVERNMENT'S CHEMICAL WEAPON USAGE ON INNOCENT CIVILIANS IN EASTERN GHOUTA**

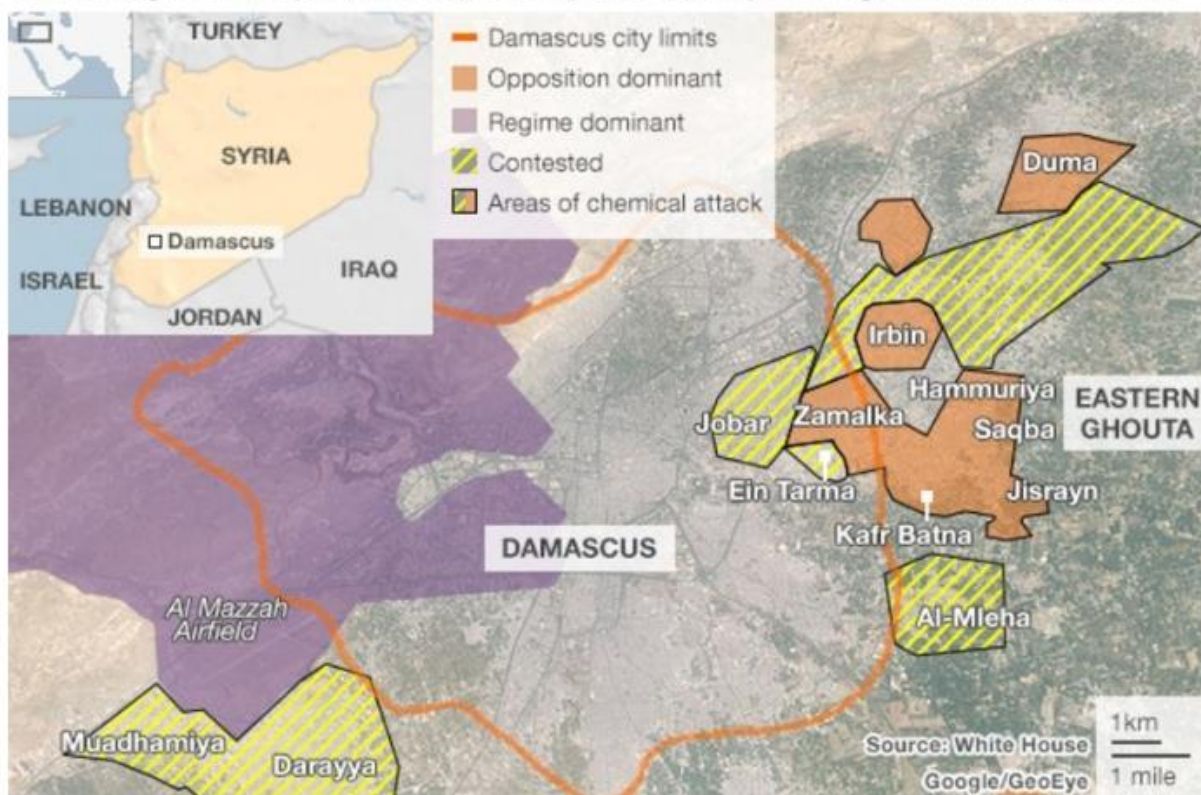
The whole of international community was spurred in the mid of August 2014 when Syrian Government was claimed to use chemical weapons on civilians, gaining renewed attentiveness to the Conflict. Observatory head Rami Abdul Rahman stated that Regime bombed Eastern Ghouta to pave the way for ground offensive, and the victims which included children and women suffered asphyxiation, dilated pupils, foaming in mouth, eventual loss of consciousness, difficulty in breathing etc. Hundreds of civilians were killed within 24 hours which was the largest single day death toll, this was the deadliest period of time in last three years. Missiles, helicopter gunships, artillery gunfire by troops and warplanes were also being used.

Nasr Harir, the Syrian Negotiation commission also spoke out against Regime's aggressions in Eastern Ghouta which is East of Damascus.

The Syrian activist also stated that the government had launched gas attacks to kill civilians, the worst chemical weapons reported, but the Assad rebels blamed the most deadly attack. In a joint statement from the USA and ten other states, Australia, France, Italy, Japan, Spain, Turkey, UK and Saudi Arabia were called for a well constructed and powerful international response. Federal Foreign Minister, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs said that all red lines were being crossed through Syria, similarly the US President, Obama said that the use of chemical weapons was the Red Line; he also accused Bashar al-Assad of killing 1,429 civilians on the poison-attack incident on 21 August. In the Syrian military doctrine the use of these deadliest chemical weapons was also integrated, but Assad's regime was denied. The Prime Minister of Turkey stated clearly that there are only chemical weapons in the Syrian government.

Centered chemical attacks also struck the tension between Russia and the USA, as Russia reaffirmed its opposition to every kind of strike. Because of variations between the members of the UN Security Council, the UN could not fully carry out any attempts on atrocities. In addition, Russia and China have vetoed three Security Council resolutions condemning the violence of the regime.

#### US intelligence map: Areas reportedly affected by 21 August chemical attack



#### FIRST US MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SEPTEMBER 2014:

The United States and five Arab allies including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Jordan conducted intensive air strikes and missile assaults and bombings. Military action was carried out against ISIS and terrorist organisations. Another Islamist rebel group was founded in March 2015 with the Army of Conquest, mostly active in Idlib, although other groups were active in the governorates of Latakia and Hama. The coalition consisted of 8 members, including al-Nusra, Ahrar ash-sham, the front, Jayz al-



Sunna, Ajnad al-Sham, Imam Bukharia Jamaat, Sham Legion, the Islamic Party of Turkey, Jund al-Aqsa (former member) and Liwa al-Haqq. Al-Nusra was a member of the group. Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Jabhat al-Nusra Front were actively backed.

### **RUSSIAN MILITARY DIRECT INTERVENTION IN 2015: RUSSIAN DIRECT AND MASS MILITARY INTERVENTION**

This was a pivotal point during Syria's civil war, when Washington provided military training and weaponry to moderate rebel groups fighting against government forces faithful to President Assad. Syrian government formally asked Russia for military involvement.

Russia began its first air attack on 30 September 2015. Russia has been conducting military campaigns in Syria since 2015 to assist Assad's regime in restoring its control of much of the nation following a catastrophic 10-year battle. The Russian jets have stricken near the border with Syria's Turkey and claimed to be killing terrorists in Syria during air strikes at the base north-east of Palmyra, which was confirmed by the Ministry of Defense in the declaration that the Russian Aviation Forces have carried out aerial strikes. But the statement did not specify either the date of strike nor the date of the air strike. The Russian jets had strikes on a border with Syria.

It was claimed by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights that the air strikers went before the Russian forces and the Fifth Syrian Corps in pursuit of cells in the Homs desert of Islamic State terrorists. 26 IS activists were killed by the Observatory. During the whole war, Russia became a key supporter of the Syrian regime and the military involvement of Moscow in 2015, an event that turned the flow of battle completely.

### **VIENNA 2015 FAILED PEACE PROCESS (PARTICIPATION OF IRAN)**

The Global Powers have re-initiated a peace process in Vienna on 30 October 2015 which was known as the negotiations of ISSG. The UAE, Qatar, Jordan, Egypt, China, France, Germany and Italy took part in these peace negotiations for the very first time. The discussions were known as the ISSG. But the participants could not manage to settle on the future of the Syrians regime.

### **PEACE TALKS IN SECOND ROUND**

All 20 ISSG members were present and on 14 November 2015 the Superpowers Russia and the United States failed to achieve compatibility with any political transition in Syria with the role of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

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## **ROLE OF MR DE MISTURA (THIRD UN ENVOY)**

On July 2014 he was selected as the international mediator seeking a stop to Syria's civil conflict by UN Secretary General Al Ban Ki-moon to substitute Lakhdar Brahimi.

In May, following a failure in the second Geneva round of negotiations in January and February, his Predecessor as United Nations Top Envoy to Syria, Mr Lakhdar Brahimi resigned. Speaking about the appointment of Mr. De Mistura, Ban Ki-moon declared that the New Special Envoy would "bring all his experience to this very difficult and complicated peace negotiations in Syria." Mr De Mistura serves in his Syria role only as a UN envoy, and not as a joint envoy to the United Nations-Arab League, as Mr Brahimi does. But the fact is that the United Nations Envoy to Syria, Staffan de Mistura, has proved unable to address the consequences of the "grand game" and the difficulties which Syria has embroiled in. He chose to give up his mission after a four-year tour of service in Syria, failing yet again where his two high-profile predecessors Kofi Annan and Lakhdar Brahi Inmi failed. De Mistura was selected to continue work in the Syrian archive by the United Nations in the context of Russia's monitoring of the Syrian archives through the games played by US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russia Forestry Minister Lavrov. He focused on making sure that his goal continued and the corners were cut.

He also played with major sides to the Syrian crisis, particularly Russia, which since its huge military intervention in September 2015 has become the number one actor in the Syrian battlefield. De Mistura's work in Syria has not been affected intentionally by the diversity and inconsistencies of the roadmaps pursued by the actors in Syria, particularly following Russia's imposition of the route set for Astana negotiations in 2016. It still remains to be claimed that he relied on a false negotiating strategy which caused him to fail.

The failure cannot be attributed merely to the impotence of the United Nations, because the failure of the United Nations simply reflects the inconsistent stances taken by the global powers, the aspirations of the actors in the area and the need to balance power.

At the end of November, De Mistura departed office. His work has produced meagre, restricted outcomes. The weaknesses of multilateral diplomacy have been shown and the UN Charter on Humanitarian and Peacekeeping's theoretical ideals have not been respected. The last estimated United Nations attempt was made by Staffan de Mistura in 2016, given by the then Special Envoy for Syria.



## **ASTANA PEACE TALKS 2016: A CRITICAL MILESTONE DURING SYRIAN CIVIL WAR**

Indirect discussions were established in Kazakhstan between the Syrian opposition groups and the representatives of government, with Russia now proceeding shockingly as a power broker in the Middle East. The discussions were held in a fancy hotel in the Kazakh capital Astana, intended for widening the cease-fire brokered in the hands of Russia's air Force and Iranian-sponsored militias following the opposition's catastrophic military loss in Aleppo. The negotiations had been anticipated to culminate to a face-to-face conference between opponents and officials of the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Rebels were however not willing to engage in direct negotiations, since the nature of the Syrian conflict has made it difficult for negotiators to develop ideas on which all sides may agree (Greig, 2013).

Currently, most of the United States, the EU, Saudi Arabia and the UN were marginalised. Russia, Turkey and Iran supported the discussions. Russia is setting new difficulties by suddenly trying to transition from combat participants to peace brokers. On the eve of the Astana discussions, leaders of the Syrian opposition delegation from 12 factions stated that Moscow should really be neutralised but rejected by Iranians and Syrians. A failure by Moscow to apply pressure on Iran and the Syrian Government to put a stop to what the opposition believes are frequent infringements of Turkish-Russian truce was blowing his influence in Syria, said Mohamed Alloush, the leader of the opposition delegation.

This is the true test for Russia's authority. If Russia fails in this position, there will be more pressures on the regime, and Iran as the guarantor of the agreement. "Russia wants to go from the direct party to the neutral, guarantor party and the Syrian regime, which wants it to break out, is blocking this and Iran with its sectarian militias in Syria."

Russland is firmly of the opinion that negotiations can be more fruitful than previous UN efforts, partially due to a military balance, and partly because the negotiations are not with political leaders representing the opposition but often living outside Syria but between the Syrian Government and fighters.

Together, Astana talks had brought together the Syrian opposition, the Assad regime and all three regional players – Turkey, Iran and Russia – on the negotiating table, producing positive outcomes that would hopefully last with a revived dimension of the Syrian Civil War following the battle for Aleppo. The immediate implications of this platform seem to have persuaded the Turkey, Russia, Iran and all the other countries engaged in the negotiations on Astana, at least in larger terms: the united endeavour aims primarily at cementing a more lasting truce in Syria.





Astana's most prominent difference from the ongoing process in Geneva was that the military opposition groups would from now on also participate in peace talks and that the representatives of six years-long conflicting factions in Syria – Assad's regime and political and military opposition groups - united around one table. In this critical stage of crisis, on the other, we can probably take the Astana Platform as a masterpiece milestone, a functional, parallel and initiative, which can also give the United Nations backed Geneva discussions a solid foundation and framework – a mechanism that still works – and save the Syrian peace process of the United States and the Nations monopoly.

It was an opening door to rework the Astana platform over the next period if necessary, since it showed that a possible peace that would be formed in Syria is built through the trilateral mechanism of Turkey-Russia-Iran. These discussions also show that creating peace in an unsure environment, as many as expectations are, is a long and hard multi-stage process.

It's evident that, with backing from the U.S. and other important governments, the system formed by these three countries will be feasible to guide Syria's peace 'from behind the cord.' We also see Astana as a major juncture since it has de-emphasized a very problematic understanding in the international community and especially in the United States, which prevailed in the post Aleppo period, and which is aimed at reducing the Syrian crisis to fighting radical jihadist—Islamic terrorism, that is, to fight Daesh.

## **RUSSIA CONSOLIDATE ITS STRATEGIC FOOTING IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

The Syrian civil war gives Russia the finest chance to strengthen its strategic base in the Middle East. As a result of the huge civil conflict, Russia has quickly been encouraged to start a new game through a somewhat direct military involvement in Syria and, in turn, by negotiating to reinforce its patches throughout the region.

Syria and the US will rely on their capacity to undertake genuine pledges to alleviate Syria's crisis (Jafarova, 2014). The Russian government has gained a prominent role in shaping the destiny and future of the Middle East through its reinforcement policy of the Syrian regime. Russia's new role has prevented the US from addressing the degree of participation in asymmetry between the US and Russia and has encouraged the US not just to recognise Russia's new predominant position in Syria and throughout the Middle East. Russian President Vladimir Putin has also made it necessary to find any political solutions in the area. While it is still very early if Russia's new involvement in the Middle East would develop as a cold New East-West conflict, it may well be said to reduce the US



predominance in Middle East affairs. It is also stated that Russia's arms manufacturing is thriving after its military power has demonstrated in Syria during the five-month battle. Arms shipments from Russia established a new high of 14.5 billion US dollars for 2015, while orders rose to 56 billion US dollars. Many safety professionals feel that Syrian weapons and this continuous conflict are utilised as training grounds for the Russian military to experience new, contemporary and extremely powerful arms of great accuracy. It has helped Russia raise and expand its standing as a leading manufacturer and exporter of armaments. Moreover, Russia is now in an excellent position to preserve its dominating role in the European energy market as the major exporting gas of Europe and without prospect for a pipeline delivering the Middle Eastern gas into Syria in the near future.

### **ISIL FAILURE**

By 2016 IS ILI had proved virtually uncontrollable some years earlier in North and East Syria, but it was starting to collapse under the strain of simultaneous confrontations with 3 rival coalitions—the Kurdish forces and their American allies, Iran-Russian-supported pro-Assad Syrian forces and a rebel group-backed Turkish coalition. The northern regions have been steadily strengthened by Kurdish and Turkish-sponsored forces, who deployed ISIL from an important strategic location.

Although, without the head of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, any area in Syria is not kept under its control, it was not completely wiped out as a movement. There are still a large number of combatants and sympathisers who might turn and spiral into revolt and hazardous terrorist acts in Syria or elsewhere. This might be harder than the previous recurrences of the group.

### **ISRAEL'S MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SYRIAN CIVIL WAR 2018**

Israeli military targets in Syria in 2018. Following the shelling of the Golan Heights by Iran, Israel launched one of the heaviest attacks in Syria when the civil conflict began. In the face of the uncalculated Iranian military installations, Israel claimed almost all Iranian military infrastructure had been destroyed in Syria.

### **CIVIL WAR (2019): TURKEY'S PARTICIPATION IN SYRIA**

The Turkish military intervention in support of the rebels contributed to ensuring a hard struggle would be fought against any aggressive government. A border rally was started by both the Syrian Government and Turkey, as its armies were strengthened within the province, while border villages were bombed by Syrian and Russian airplanes.

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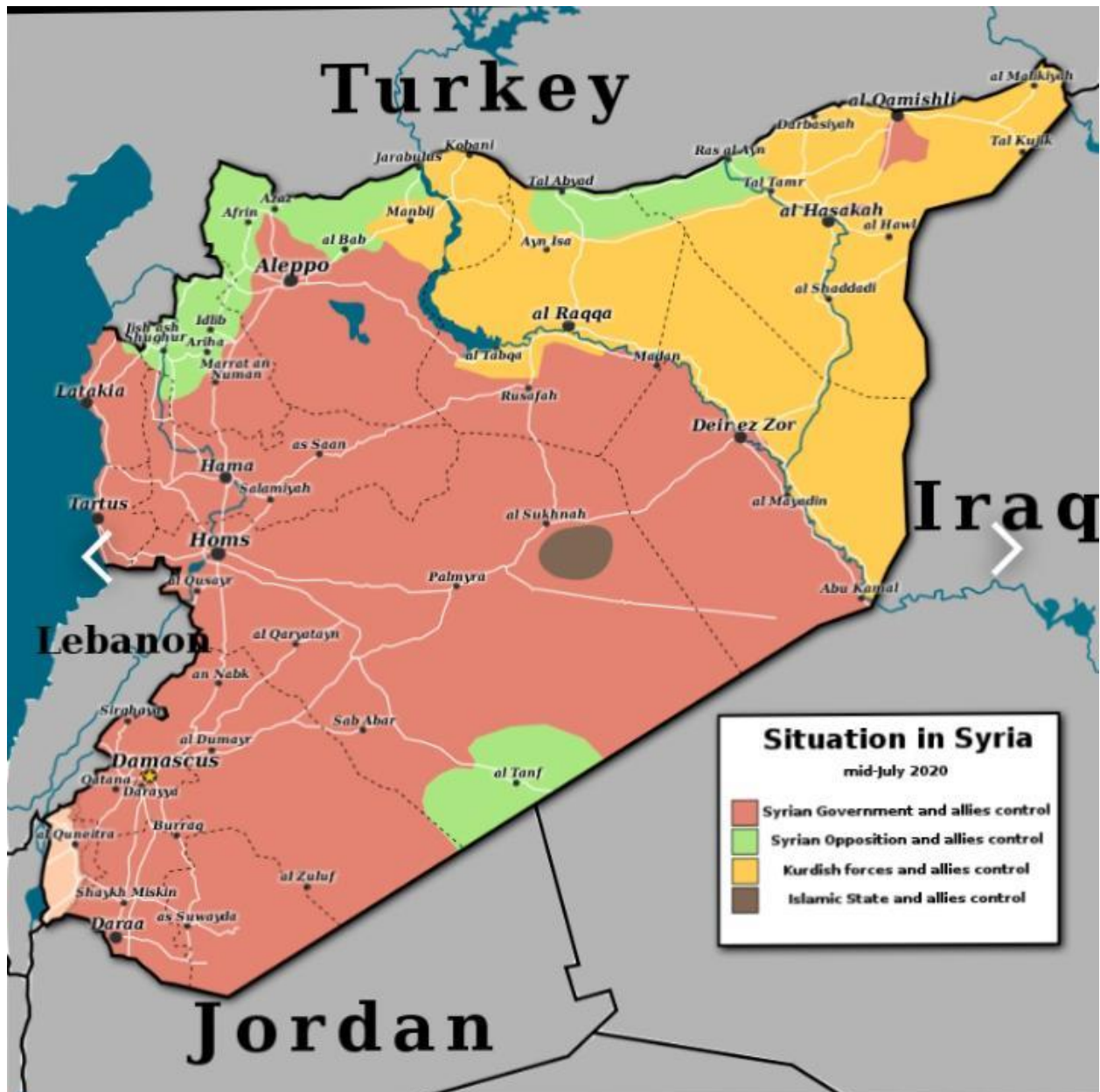
By agreeing and executing a buffer zone between the Rebel and the government troops, Russia and Turkey have sought to de-escalate the situation. In the region of 9 to 12 miles (15 to 20km), the buffer zone requires that all heavy armaments and fighters withdraw. At the time, it was uncertain if the pact, a top down agreement, would be observed by all parties. The Syrian government has rapidly taken control the Buffer Zone Convention, and mainstream opposition groups, including the Free Syria Army.

### **RETURNING TO IDLIB IN 2020 HIGH INTENSITY FIGHTING**

The civil war is still not ended, though, and the north-west Idlib region is not controlled by the government. At the beginning of 2020, a Russo-funded push from the Syrian army to seize Idlib from the last concentrated armed opposition organisations led to conflicts with Turkey's forces in Ankara's customary militias. The skirmishes recalled the fact that although it seemed that the conflict may yet flare up and intensify in its closing phases. The situation in the north-east is especially precarious as a consequence of the evacuation by U.S. troops, alongside proxies and Syrian Kurdish militia, of the Turkish, Syria and Russian soldiers from the border with Turkey. In 2020 a further humanitarian catastrophe emerged from highly intensive fighting in Idlib.

### **THE SITUATION OF SYRIA (MID JULY 2020)**

## VEIWS OF DIFFERENT REPRESENTATIVES ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT REGARDING SYRIAN CIVIL WAR





The Representative of Tunisia stated that there can be no military solution to the crisis in Syria; rather, a Syrian-led and -owned political solution under the patronage of the United Nations that includes women. The root causes of conflict should be addressed as it is the the only way forward. He urged relevant parties to overcome the current standstill situation in the Syrian Constitutional Committee's work and hold continuous and regular meetings in Geneva.

The Representative of the United Kingdom, emphasizing that complete implementation of resolution 2254 (2015) is the only sustainable solution to the conflict in Syria, said the elections being held on 26 May are not part of this process and are planned to undergo no the dictatorship of one man and prop up his unrepentant ,unreformed and undemocratic regime. Calling for authentic and constructive participation in the Constitutional Committee, he stated the cross-border aid mechanism has enabled over 46,000 trucks to carry out assistance to millions of Syrians facing the worst impacts of the terrible conflict.

The Representative of China spoke in his national capacity, stressed the significant role of resolution 2254 (2015) and called on all parties to maintain coordination with the Special Envoy. The Constitutional Committee must work independently, avoiding external interference, he said, to assure that the political procedure is led and owned by Syrians keeping in veiw recent confrontations between armed groups and the presence of foreign troops, he urged all parties to respect Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity and cease attacks against that country.

The Representative of Vietnam, recapitulated the central role of a comprehensive and lasting political settlement, drew concerns on the importance of developing certitude and credibility among concerned parties. Voicing support for the bridging task of the Special Envoy and his team, especially in creating favourable conditions for the continuation of the Constitutional Committee talks, he called on all parties to refrain from any action that could further deteriorate the situation.

The Representative of Mexico stated that the only way out of the conflict in Syria is through broad political dialogue and resolution 2254 (2015) is the only established basis to reach this goal. He expressed concern over the prolonged pause in the work of the Constitutional Committee due to delegates lack of capability to agree on working methods, calling on the Government-appointed delegation to participate constructively in this process.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The Syrian war is the result of several international institutional failures. The future of Syria therefore remains unknown, at least as catastrophic as the previous ten years appear. The diplomatic and political processes are practically nonexistent, and not just the territory borders of Syria have become a deadlock for other governments.

It is very crucial to analyse what went wrong in talks. If such difficulties are not addressed, there is a threat to the future of diplomacy. Although talks have been suspended, "multilateral power may, even in the most difficult and divisive crises of the new multipolar international order, be constructed and rebuilt by effective mediators in civil wars"

The war is not concluded, unfortunately only in a static condition, and the pain is going on in a country so fractured and chaotic that even the top authority on the planet cannot estimate the dead in any meaningful manner. The government will only be able to use further funds for rebuilding, restoring and continuing its security state and use aid as a weapons of war, as the U.N. has shamelessly made possible since day one, even if a restructuring of Assad's regime could be discussed or disregarded.

When the struggle is finally over, supposedly he has employed chemical weapons on his own people, Assad will still face the burden of rebuilding his nation. In addition, according to DeRouen (2015), once a conflict ends, violence can continue owing to the absence of the state to regulate it and become exacerbated by a worsening economy. The three key elements of the peace-building triangle – the level of antagonism, local capability and international commitment – must be recognised to establish effective peace. Who will pay the cost remains an unanswered issue. America and Europe are unwilling to deal with Assad. And the cost of rebuilding, projected at the United Nations in 250 billion dollars, would probably not be met by Moscow. While former US President Donald Trump was keen to remove the US from the crisis in Syria, President Joe Biden still needs to define his attitude to a conflict whose ending appearing hazy on the horizon, nevertheless, is obvious and present in its devastating impact.





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